

MANHUNT

VOLUME 6, NO. 3

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Pop went right to work when the car hit me.
He sure knew how to turn a dishonest buck. . . .

don't twist my arm

by
**JACK
RITCHIE**

POP TOLD ME to roll up the sleeve of my shirt. "You can see for yourself," he said. "The kid's arm is all bent. He can't use it hardly at all now and it'll get worse year by year."

Mr. Ward leaned forward to look and the eyes in his heavy face showed nothing.

Pop waved a hand. "We'll hit them for all we can get. I don't care who pays. Either Peterson or his insurance company."

Mr. Ward rolled the cigar in his mouth a couple of times and then reached for his pen.

"Henry Peterson is the guy's name," Pop said. He watched Mr. Ward write. "Senator Henry Peterson."

Mr. Ward and Pop looked at each other for about ten seconds, and then Mr. Ward got a little smile on his face. "All right," he said. "Go on."

"My kid was crossing the street when he was run down by the senator's car," Pop said. "A big job in the five thousand dollar class."

I cleared my throat. "I was playing ball in the street."

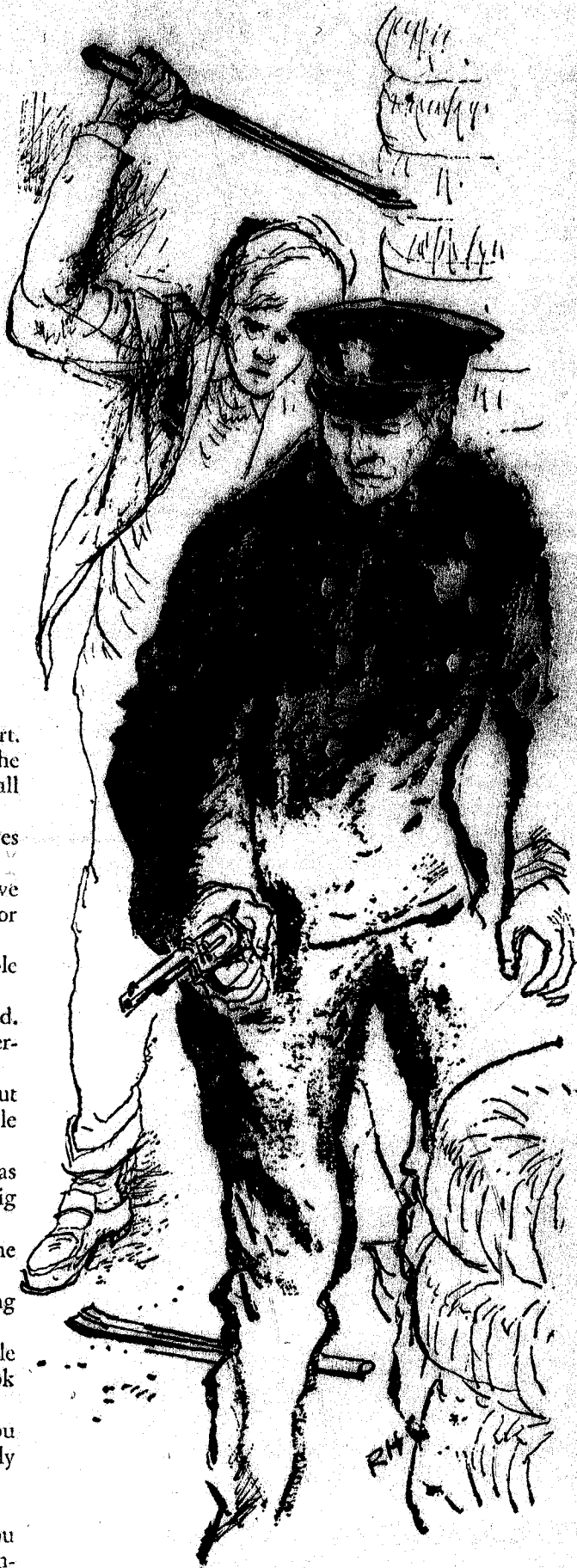
Mr. Ward's eyes went over me without finding anything interesting. "Shut up, kid," he said.

"I was sitting on the stoop and I saw the whole thing," Pop said. "I picked up Freddie and took him to a doctor."

Mr. Ward played with his pen. "How come you didn't take the kid to a hospital? That's what usually happens in cases like that."

Pop shrugged. "The doc was nearer."

Mr. Ward smiled and rubbed his chin. "You were excited. That's natural. A father's first con-



cern is for his kid and he's got the right to lose his head. What did Peterson do?"

Pop crossed his legs. "He came along."

I remembered the look on Senator Peterson's face when he saw how dirty Dr. Miller's office was.

Mr. Ward looked at my arm again. "When did all this happen?"

Pop shifted in his chair. "About two years ago."

Mr. Ward chuckled very softly.

Pop got a little red. "I figured the arm would turn out all right. But the kid kept yammering about it day and night. I finally took him to another doctor."

Mr. Ward puffed his cigar and waited.

Pop ran his tongue over his lips. "They'll have to break Freddie's arm and put it back together again. Even then it might never grow any longer than it is now."

Pop shook his head and looked down at his hands. "The kid's future is ruined. And look at him. He's lost maybe twenty pounds. He can't get no sleep nights because of the hurt."

Mr. Ward studied me. "How old is he?"

"Fifteen," Pop said. "He's always been a runt."

Pop took a cigarette out of a crumpled pack and lit it. "I signed a paper with Peterson's insurance company and got five hundred dollars. I needed the money. But that don't mean a thing now. Not when the arm turned out this way."

Mr. Ward looked at the ceiling. "Why not sue the doctor?"

"You can't get blood out of a stone," Pop said.

Mr. Ward chuckled again and looked Pop over. "When we get together with Peterson, it might be a good idea if you shaved. Wear a necktie too."

We left Mr. Ward's office and walked down three flights of stairs to the street.

When we got near Danny's Bar, Pop slowed down and rattled the change in his pocket. He licked his lips, but I knew he wasn't going in there. Danny charges thirty-five cents for a drink. At O'Brien's you get the same stuff for twenty.

At Thirty-eighth, we crossed the street so that we wouldn't have to go past Ricco's. Pop doesn't go near there ever since he had that fight with Louie Milo who hangs out there.

Pop went into O'Brien's and I followed him.

Mr. O'Brien waited until Pop put money on the bar before he poured a drink. Then he looked at me. "Get the hell out of here, kid."

Pop yawned. "You heard him, Freddie."

"I'm not doing anything," I said.

Mr. O'Brien leaned over the bar. "Move before I put a boot in your rump."

Pop downed his drink and put some more change on the bar.

I looked at him for a few seconds and then I left and started walking home.

My arm hurt pretty bad. It gets that way when it's damp.

I went upstairs to the place where Pop and I live. There was half a bottle of olives in the refrigerator and some butter. There was a tomato too, but it was rotten. I found some bread and ate a little before I went outside again.

Turk and Pete and Gino were hanging around Harrigan's Grocery and they were wearing their Red Hawk jackets.

Once I nearly got one. I had eight dollars, but that was gone now.

They didn't pay no attention when I came up and leaned against the building next to them.

Pete got out his cigarettes and passed the pack to Turk and Gino. I put out my hand, but Gino gave the pack back to Pete.

Pete lit up for all three of them.

"I once read how that got started," I said. "You know, that business about three on a match being unlucky. It was in the First World War and if you kept a match lit long enough for three lights, a German sniper was liable to get a bead on you."

They didn't look at me and so I guess they didn't care about the story.

I waited a little while and then said. "I saw a couple of the Goldens today. I went through their territory."

Gino looked at me. "You beat their heads together? Is that it, Freddie?"

I changed my mind about what I was going to say. I shrugged. "I didn't want to start nothing there. I would of been mobbed."

"I'm surprised at you, Freddie," Turk said. "You're the brave type. It runs in the family."

Gino coughed on some cigarette smoke. "I thought I'd bust a gut when I seen little Louie chase Freddie's old man out of Ricco's. He's sure got speed when he's scared. Ain't that right, Freddie?"

I looked at the Poulos girls passing across the street and tried to quick think of something to say about the way they swung their hips. But I couldn't think of nothing.

Red Kelly's chromed-up Chevy pulled to the curb and Pete, Turk and Gino got inside. I thought there was room for one more, but Gino shut the door after him.

They took off and I watched them turn the corner.

Pop came home around ten o'clock with Willie Bragan. They had a pint with them and they began talking about the job they were going to do on Saturday night. I asked if I could be lookout, but Pop told me to shut up.

When they settled everything and finished the pint, Bragan went home.

Before Pop went to bed, he looked under the kitchen clock. He always does that ever since he found the eight dollars I set aside for the jacket.

I fixed myself some butter bread and went to the window and looked down. It was getting quiet

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outside and the traffic was thinning.

Pop woke at twelve. When he was through, I got the mop and cleaned up. Then I went to bed.

Senator Peterson was at the meeting and Mr. Jenkins, the lawyer from his insurance company, and Mr. Ward.

Pop looked mad. "You seen the X-rays. The kid's crippled for life."

Mr. Jenkins shuffled some of the papers on his lap. "This Dr. Miller who set the boy's arm. He lost his license several months ago for unethical practices."

"How the hell was I supposed to know what kind of a doctor he was?" Pop said. "The sign on the door said 'Doctor.' Am I supposed to drop the kid on the floor and check with the Medical Society first?"

Mr. Jenkins' voice was dry. "How did you happen to select him?"

Mr. Ward cleared his throat. "As my client explained, Dr. Miller was the nearest aid available."

Senator Peterson had grayish hair and he was about Pop's age. But his skin was clear.

He studied Pop. "It would seem that this Dr. Miller is the man to sue."

Mr. Ward smiled. "Dr. Miller disappeared shortly after losing his license. We've made an extensive search, but we've been unable to find a trace of him."

Pop pointed to Senator Peterson. "You're the one who's responsible. It was your car that hit the boy."

Mr. Jenkins sighed. "I fail to see that you have any case at all. At the time of the accident you absolutely refused to have the boy taken to a hospital. You refused to allow our doctors to examine him. In addition, you signed an agreement waiving all future claims, for which you received five hundred dollars. Under the circumstances, neither my company nor Senator Peterson can be held responsible for the mistakes of this Dr. Miller."

It was quiet for a while and then Mr. Ward took the cigar out of his mouth. "Perhaps we don't have an iron-bound case, from the legal point of view." He looked at Senator Peterson. "I believe you are running for the Senate again? Do you suppose the publicity might be harmful?"

Mr. Jenkins and Senator Peterson looked at each other.

"I see," Mr. Jenkins said. He put his papers back in his brief case and got to his feet. "Are you coming, Senator?"

Senator Peterson didn't look at him.

Mr. Jenkins smiled tightly. "At any rate, my company is not running for the Senate."

He went to the door and left.

But Senator Peterson stayed.

It was evening and I didn't feel like going to the movies. I got some candy bars instead and

DON'T TWIST MY ARM

went back home. I went up the fire escape and sat down outside our window.

I heard voices inside the kitchen and shifted over a little so I could take a peek inside.

Dr. Miller and Pop were drinking from a bottle on the table. I could see the label and it was a real expensive brand.

Dr. Miller filled his glass. "The kid around?"

Pop lit a cigar. "No. I gave him a buck and told him to take in a movie." He slapped the table. "That bastard Ward took forty percent. He even said we were lucky he didn't take more."

Dr. Miller was bald and he wore glasses that made his eyes twice as big as anybody else's. He shrugged. "It's robbery, but there's nothing we can do about it. We still got twelve thousand out of the deal and we split that even."

I threw away the candy bar. I could feel sweat begin all over my body.

Pop's face was dark red. "I get a lousy six thousand. That's all I get for listening to that kid whimper for two years."

I shook my head. That was all wrong too. I didn't whimper.

Dr. Miller took a cigar out of the box on the table. "We had to wait at least a couple of years. I told you that in the beginning. We had to give that arm time to get real bad."

Pop pounded the table. "By rights, I'm entitled to more than a fifty-fifty split. I'm the one who got the idea for the whole thing the second I seen what a high price car hit Freddie."

Dr. Miller laughed. "Hell, all the kid got out of it was a trip to the movies. Be satisfied that he don't know what you did to him. He might get the notion to cut your throat one of these nights."

I gripped the cool railing of the fire escape hard with my good hand. There was a big knife in the drawer of the kitchen table. I'd wait until Dr. Miller was gone and Pop was asleep. Then I'd do it.

Dr. Miller stayed for another hour before he left. I settled down on the fire escape, waiting and watching Pop drink. I figured that he'd probably have enough by eleven o'clock.

Then I remembered that this was Saturday and he and Bragan were supposed to do a job.

I wondered if Pop could get out of it. He wouldn't want to take any chances with small stuff, now that he had the six thousand. But he couldn't tell Bragan that he had the money. You don't do something like that with Bragan if you want to keep it.

Willie Bragan came at ten and Pop looked surprised. I guess he forgot that it was Saturday.

Bragan looked at the bottle of whiskey and then at the cigars. "I thought you was broke."

Pop licked his lips. "A guy paid me back fifty he owed."

Bragan grunted. "Since when you been lending

money?"

Pop laughed nervous. "An old friend."

Bragan wasn't buying that, but he shrugged. "We'll talk about it later. Let's get going. I got the truck downstairs in front."

Pop's voice had a whine in it. "Let's put it off, Willie. I'm not feeling so good tonight."

Bragan smiled a little and took a handful of cigars out of the box.

Pop didn't like that, but Bragan is a big man and you don't complain.

"Honest, Willie," Pop said. "I've been feeling rotten all day."

Bragan smelled one of the cigars. "Take a couple aspirins."

I watched them get in the truck down below and then I went down the fire escape.

It was cool in the streets and I began walking. Pop wouldn't be back for three or four hours and I couldn't sit still that long. Not with what was going on in my head.

I don't know how long it was, but after a while I was in a long empty street and there were mostly warehouses on both sides. I was a little surprised to be there. But now that I was, I sat down in a doorway and watched the warehouse near the end of the block.

A cop turned the corner far down the street. He walked slow, shining his flashlight into the doorways.

And then he stopped in front of the warehouse I was watching. He seemed to be listening and then he took the gun out of his holster. He moved on his toes to the doors of the warehouse and he listened for another half a minute.

I wondered if I should do something, but then I remembered what I'd heard on the fire escape and I kept quiet.

The cop pulled open one of the sliding doors fast and jumped inside. The light poured out and I could see the cop's shadow stretching all the way across the road.

I waited a while and then I got up and walked toward the open door.

The cop had his back to me and he was standing just inside the door with his gun.

Pop and Bragan were facing him with their hands over their heads. Pop's face was white and Bragan was scowling. They were standing next to Bragan's big truck and it was about half loaded with automobile parts and new tires from the warehouse.

Bragan's eyes shifted in my direction and he saw me.

The cop noticed that and he jumped to one side like a scared cat. His gun swung back and forth between us. "Get over there with the rest of them."

I shook my head. "I don't have anything to do with this. I was just passing by."

The cop had a hard laugh. "At two o'clock in

the morning, kid? Like hell." His gun jerked again.

"Get your hands up."

I put up my right arm. "I can't lift the other one."

He looked at my short arm and his lips twisted. "So you got a cripple for the lookout work. Maybe that's all he's good for. He wouldn't be much help wrestling tires into your truck."

I looked at the cop and I saw that he had the kind of yellow brown eyes that Pop has.

Pop swallowed hard. "Look, we can fix this up."

The cop grinned. "That's right. I'm just a poor cop. I don't earn too much."

I could tell from his voice that he was just playing, but Pop kept trying anyhow.

"Five hundred bucks," Pop said. "I can raise five hundred."

The cop kept grinning. "Keep going."

Pop was sweating. He had a record and it wasn't going to be easy for him if he got in front of a judge. "A thousand," he said. "I can get it to you in a day."

Bragan was looking at Pop now too and I guess he was wondering whether Pop was faking it or whether he really had the money. Maybe he was thinking about the whiskey and the cigars.

The cop's eyes flicked around the big room and he saw the wall phone.

Pop's voice got high. "Two thousand," he said. "Three."

For a second the cop looked interested. But then I guess he took another look at Pop and figured that he couldn't have that kind of money.

The cop couldn't keep his eyes on everything. Not on Bragan, and Pop, and me, and the wall phone. I guess he decided I was the least important.

He took his eyes away from me for a few seconds when he started edging for the phone.

Pop looked at me now and he was asking for help.

There wasn't much time and I had to make up my mind. I hesitated for a second and then I stooped down and grabbed a tire iron leaning against the wall. I swung with all my might and the iron bit deep into the cop's skull.

Bragan came out of the shock first. He went to the door and pulled it shut. Then he knelt down beside the cop. After a while, he looked up. "He's dead."

I nodded and tossed the tire iron aside.

Pop was shaking. "The kid done it. We got no part of this."

Bragan got to his feet. "We're in it as deep as the kid is. We're in the big league now."

He picked up the tire iron and wiped my fingerprints off with his handkerchief. "All right," he said. "Let's go."

He went to the big doors and slid them open.

I stood to one side and watched them get into

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the truck. Pop put his head out of the cab. "Damn it," he yelled to me. "Get in."

I stood there for a few seconds, uncertain. I was sick with what he was. I didn't know if I wanted to stick with him any more—I didn't even know why I'd stuck with him this long . . .

"For God's sake, kid, get in," he said again. And I saw his frightened eyes dart over in the

direction of Bragan.

Pop would have trouble with Bragan about the six thousand. *He might need me.* And as I thought it, I realized why I'd stuck with him, because no one else on earth had ever needed or wanted me for any reason, and, jeez, how I needed to be needed . . .

"All right," I said. "All right, Pop, I'm coming."



Ready Remedy

In Syracuse, N. Y., Thomas Glovmore, 52, insisted on taking a sack containing almost a hundred bottles of medicine when he was sentenced to jail for panhandling. Asked why he had so much medicine, Glovmore replied, "That's easy. Sometimes I don't feel good—like right now."

Safety First

A 17-year-old Ravenna, O., youth being held in jail complained to a reporter that he had no way to light his cigarets. "They won't let me have matches or a lighter here," he explained. Police accused the youth of setting 35 fires including a \$90,000 church blaze.

Insult to Injury

A thief in Cheshire, Conn., awakened Joseph Fazzone in the wee hours with a telephone call to tell him his automobile had been stolen. Investigating, Fazzone found the thief had also taken two evergreen trees from his front lawn.

House of Doors

In Romford, England, Philip Tomkins, 53, received a month's jail sentence for stealing 428 door handles from the hardware store where he was employed. Tomkins said he stole the handles because he thought they would come in handy in his new home he was planning to build.



BY POPULAR DEMAND

The June issue of MANHUNT, on sale March 25, will be in the handy POCKET-SIZE. Don't miss it. Be sure to ask your newsdealer to reserve your copy today.

DON'T TWIST MY ARM